

Forever Holding Peace

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/2232957) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/2232957>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	F/F
Fandom:	Kill la Kill
Relationship:	Kiryuuin Satsuki/Matoi Ryuuko
Characters:	Kiryuuin Satsuki , Matoi Ryuuko , Mankanshoku Mako
Additional Tags:	Implied Incest , Time Constraint Writing , Wedding Feels
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2014-08-31 Words: 1,012 Chapters: 1/1

Forever Holding Peace

by [janewithwhy](#)

Summary

Hold your tongue, it does nothing in this moment to speak now.

Notes

A quick writing exercise in the middle of my hectic day. I think I flubbed the end just a little bit because of the constraint, but please enjoy. As always, you can find me at [janewithwhy.tumblr.com](#).

Wisps of sick, blue smoke hung in the air like delicate tendrils of some gentle tree. Ryuko took another drag of her slender, dark cigarette--a luxury vice for a luxury occasion. She itched at her collar, still open, bow tie hanging loosely against her chest. Her black blazer lay draped over the back of her chair and she stood on the balcony of some atrociously extravagant hotel, enjoying the cool breeze. She swirled her glass, whiskey and ice clinking together as she did so, then took another drag before exhaling and closing her eyes, listening to street static and birds chirping and leaves rustling against one another.

“Almost ready to see her?”

Ryuko turned to look back into her hotel room. Mako was standing there, a shy smile on her face. Her pale yellow dress swished about her ankles as she walked towards her friend. She leaned against the balcony, enjoying the sun, but frowning as Ryuko took another silent drag. The cigarette burned slow--she started five minutes ago and wasn't even halfway done with it. She chased with a taste of whiskey.

“Those aren't good for you,” Mako said. Ryuko shrugged.

“I know,” was all she said. Mako didn't say anything else as she let Ryuko drink and smoke and look contemplatively out towards the villa beneath them. The bags under Ryuko's eyes were covered with a light layer of foundation and a small amount of blush to blend with her skin, and for once, her hair was combed and straightened. After ten more minutes, the cigarette was put out into the ashtray that held numerous others. Her glass was slick with dew, but Ryuko went back inside and poured more whiskey over the slowly fading cubes. She downed the liquid in one healthy gulp and felt Mako come up behind her.

With an almost maternal hand, Mako straightened Ryuko's collar until she turned around, then finished buttoning up her crisp white shirt. Her slender fingers worked to tie the bow tie snugly against Ryuko's neck, a smile on Mako's lips all the while. But it was a smile that was laced in sadness, done up in the corners with a little too much effort--a gift out of courtesy for her companion. Ryuko sighed as she took up her suspenders and smoothed out the front of her shirt herself.

“It'll be okay,” Mako said. Those words would not help the hurt in her heart in that moment, but it was a truth that needed to be said. A prophecy for a time that would be beyond this.

She took up her blazer and met Mako at the front door to their hotel room.

“Put a smile on, Ryuko,” she said, encouraging. Ryuko tried, but it felt like a grimace or a flinch. “Let's go see the bride.”

Tiredly, Ryuko followed Mako down the hall and turned to a more extravagant room. The door was slightly ajar, so they walked in without preamble. Satsuki was seated in a chair, a makeup artist and stylist working in front and behind her to put the finishing touches on her face. She didn't know how it was possible, but Ryuko's heart both lifted and dropped all at once. Satsuki looked beautiful in her white dress and painted lips, a faint amount of blush

accenting her cheekbones. Ryuko's eyes flicked down to Satsuki's lips, watched them part, and heard her voice address her in greeting.

She kissed those lips hours ago. She knew she would kiss them again, but right now this entire act felt like so much of a farce that she could almost feel bile rising in her throat. She tried one of those grimace-smiles again.

"You look great, sis," she said. Satsuki smiled at her, tiredness evident in her eyes as well. They locked gazes and felt some kind of finality between each other even though both knew that their trysts weren't going to stop because of some extravagant and traditional ceremony. It was all for show. Wasn't it?

Right on schedule they finished and Ryuko lead Satsuki out of her room, down to the hotel lobby and into the waiting limousine. They sat in silence on the ride to the ceremonial hall. Mako gripped Ryuko's hand as the car slowed. It was like being driven to her own execution. Upon stepping out, habit took hold of Satsuki's arms and hands, and she reached out to smooth Ryuko's blazer and straighten her bow tie. She didn't kiss her, for fear of leaving lipstick against her cheek, but when she walked away, Satsuki began to think that maybe she should have.

The ceremony was boring. A formality that was a necessity to her betrothed. Ryuko sat in the front row and Satsuki felt her eyes on her back the entire time. It took all of her resolve to not glance in the direction of her sister at almost every second. Satsuki didn't even realize it was happening until she heard the marriage officiant's voice grow louder, booming over everyone. She thought that they took this part out.

"If any of you among us have reasons for this couple to not be wed," they said. Satsuki felt her face get hot. Her hands clenched around her withering bouquet. "Speak now or forever hold your peace."

A beat.

She felt Ryuko's stare. She heard her own blood rush in her ears. Her face flushed. Was she going to faint? Another beat. A bead of sweat dripped down the back of her neck. She clenched her hands tighter, stilling them. Ryuko sat, knuckles white, lips pursed into a thin line. She tried to remind herself that this ceremony was just a formality, an act. Their relationship could never be stopped. It would never be stopped. Saying anything now would be ridiculous, foul, selfish. It would be futile.

She held her tongue.

The officiant went on.

Satsuki wondered which she was more surprised at.

The fact that Ryuko hadn't said anything? Or her desperate, sudden desire in that moment for her sister to speak up?

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